

Message Text

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ACTION NEA-10

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FM AMEMBASSY NEW DELHI

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 805

INFO AMEMBASSY DACCA

AMEMBASSY ISLAMABAD

AMEMBASSY KATHMANDU

AMCONGEN CALCUTTA

LIMITED OFFICIAL USE NEW DELHI 1206

E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PFOR, BG, IN, SOPN

SUBJECT: EDITORIAL COMMENT ON BREAKDOWN IN FARAKKA TALKS

1. EDITORIALS IN DELHI ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRESS CHARACTERIZED THE BREAKDOWN IN THE TALKS AS "UNFORTUNATE". ALTHOUGH SOME EDITORIALS WERE MORE SORROWFUL THAN INDIGNANT IN TONE, ALL PREDICTABLY LAID BREAKDOWN AT DACCA'S DOOR, PRINCIPALLY FOR ALLEGEDLY NOT COOPERATING IN 1975 AGREEMENT TO JOINTLY STUDY FARAKKA EFFECTS, FOR FAILING TO SEE THAT FARAKKA WOULD BENEFIT BANGLADESH IN FLOOD CONTROL, AND FOR REJECTING REASONABLENESS OF INDIA'S REPORTED OFFER TO EQUALLY SHARE FLOW. SEVERAL TOOK HARD LINE THAT BANGLADESH'S COMPLAINTS WERE BASELESS, ITS MOTIVES POLITICAL, AND ITS SINCERITY IN SEEKING A RESOLUTION QUESTIONABLE. MOST EDITORIALS EXPECTED THAT BDG WOULD ATTEMPT TO "INTERNATIONALIZE" ISSUE ONCE MORE AND WOULD INTENSIFY ITS ANTI-INDIAN PROPAGANDA AT HOME AND ABROAD.

2. MILDEST REACTION WAS THAT OF "NATIONAL HERALD" WHICH CALLED FAILURE OF TALKS "UNFORTUNATE," ADVISED TWO SIDES NOT TO BE "DISAPPOINTED" AND URGED THEM TO TRY AGAIN TO ARRIVE AT A "JUST
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AND AMICABLE SETTLEMENT". GIVEN WHAT IT CALLED NATURE AND TENACITY OF BDG'S PROPAGANDA CAMPAIGN, "THE STATESMAN" QUESTIONED WHETHER BANGLADESH WAS REALLY INTERESTED IN A COMPREHENSIVE INTERIM AGREEMENT. THE NEWSPAPER ALSO SAID THAT PERHAPS THE JOINT STUDY WAS NOT UNDERTAKEN "BECAUSE IT WOULD HAVE SHOWN BANGLADESHI COMPLAINTS ABOVE ADVERSE EFFECTS TO BE LARGELY BASELESS".

3. THE "INDIAN EXPRESS" FEARED THAT FURTHER ATTEMPTS BY BANGLADESH TO INTERNATIONALIZE ISSUE WOULD ONLY "EXACERBATE MATTERS FURTHER" AND NOTED THAT A "SPIRIT OF GIVE AND TAKE ON BOTH SIDES" WAS NECESSARY. THE EXPRESS ALSO WARNED THAT THE PRESENT REGIME IN BANGLADESH "IS BARKING UP THE WRONG TREE WHEN

IT TRIES TO ENMESH THE ISSUE IN UNNECESSARY CONTROVERSIES WHOSE ORIGIN APPEARS TO BE MORE POLITICAL THAN A CONSIDERATION OF THE ENDURING WELFARE OF THE PEOPLE". THE FAILURE OF THE TALKS, "THE TIMES OF INDIA" SAID, SHOWED THAT BANGLADESH IS NOT ANXIOUS FOR A SETTLEMENT BECAUSE "IT HAS NOT BEEN AFFECTED ADVERSELY IN ANY WAY" BY THE OPERATION OF FARAKKA. THE TIMES ALSO SAID THAT DELHI SHOULD NOT WORRY UNDULY ABOUT IMPROVING RELATIONS WITH THE BDG AND IF, AS IT APPEARS, THE RULERS IN DACCA HAVE CONCLUDED THAT THEY CAN "STAY IN OFFICE BEST ON THE STRENGTH OF THE ANTI-INDIA SENTIMENT THEY AND SOME OTHERS HAVE WHIPPED UP IN THEIR COUNTRY", THERE IS LITTLE THE GOI CAN DO TO PERSUADE THEM OTHERWISE. THE "PATRIOT" DENIED ENTIRELY THAT WHAT THE GOI DOES WITH THE GANGES WATERS IS ANYBODY ELSE'S BUSINESS, AND COMPLAINED THAT THE HEAD OF THE CHINESE TRADE MISSION VISITING BANGLADESH "PROMISED ALL POSSIBLE HELP AS LONG AS IT IS INDIA THAT WILL SUFFER".
SCHNEIDER

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Decaption Note:
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 22 May 2009
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
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